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A LETTER

TO THE

FOLLOWERS OF ELÍAS HICKS,

IN THE

CITY OF BALTIMORE AND ITS VICINITY.

BY

JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

BALTIMORE:

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LETTER.

BALTIMORE, 11th mo. 4th, 1839.

DEAR FRIENDS—

Many of you are aware, that in the course of the fall of last year, I applied for the use of the meeting-house in Lombard street, now in your occupation, for the holding of a public meeting for worship, to which I particularly wished to invite, among others, the members of your own body. This proposal was declined; but I was at the same time, kindly invited to take my seat in your meeting on a first day morning, and to relieve my mind by such expression of sentiment as I might there feel it to be my duty to offer.

A year has now passed away since this circumstance occurred; but as I am still deeply interested in your highest welfare, and am much drawn towards you in the cords of christian love, I venture to take this method of informing you, why I could not avail myself of your offer. Possibly I may, at the same time, be enabled to cast off that burden of religious exercise, which has continued to rest upon me, with respect to yourselves, and all who unite with you in religious profession. I wish, however, in the first place, to remark, that it is with the feelings of deference towards *you*, and of much diffidence as it regards *myself*, that I venture upon this public address.

Allow me, then, to inform you, that while I should have felt no difficulty in making use of the meeting-house which you occupy, for a meeting of my own appointment, I could not conscientiously involve myself in that religious fellowship with your body, which would have been obviously indicated by my taking my seat among you, in one of your own assemblies for worship.

It is with true respect and love, that I speak thus plainly; and under the same feelings will endeavour to state, with equal plainness, the grounds of this conscientious objection.

I have perused parts of the sermons and writings of the late Elias Hicks, and other documents which came from the pens of some of his associates. I have also had the opportunity of hearing the preaching of some of your ministers; and have freely conversed in private with several leading members of your body.

The result is a clear conviction in my own mind, that many of those who once occupied, or who still occupy, the front rank amongst you, entertain the opinion, that Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the son of Mary, was only a human prophet—endued, indeed, with a large measure of the Spirit of God—but a mere man like ourselves, liable to sin, and himself requiring salvation. I cannot perceive that there is the smallest difference of sentiment on this subject, between Elias Hicks and his followers, and the class of professing Christians, commonly called Unitarians. Now it seems to me to be impossible, that persons who entertain such a view of the “*man of sorrows*,” can regard him in the character of the *Saviour of the world*. *Man* cannot “by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him.” “I am God, saith Jehovah, and besides me there is no *Saviour*.”

Hence it follows, that those who look upon Jesus of Nazareth as a mere man, almost necessarily deny the doctrine of his propitiatory death and sacrifice on the cross. This observation applies, as I believe, to the leading members of your own body. So far as I have had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with their sentiments, I have been constrained to conclude, that they look upon the death of Jesus on the cross, “without the gate” of Jerusalem, as an “outward” circumstance—belonging solely to the history of the past—with which we have now no concern whatsoever, except perhaps as an example of patient suffering, in submission to the will of God. Now if this is a just view of the sentiments which your leaders entertain on these two vital points in religion, it becomes conspicuous that they have forsaken that Foundation, on which alone George Fox, and his brethren, professed to build.

“We own and believe,” says George Fox, “in the only wise, omnipotent, and everlasting God, the Creator of all things in heaven and earth, and the preserver of all that he hath made, who is God over all, blessed for ever, to whom be all honor, glory, praise, and thanksgiving, both now and for ever more. And we own and believe in Jesus Christ, his beloved and only-begotten Son, in whom he is well pleased, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the express image of the *invisible God*, the first-born of every creature, by whom were

all things created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him. And we own and believe, that he was made a sacrifice for sin, who knew no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth; that he was crucified for us in the flesh without the gates of Jerusalem; and that he was buried and rose again the third day, by the power of his Father, for our justification, and that he ascended up into heaven, and now sitteth at the right hand of God. This Jesus who was the foundation of the holy prophets, is OUR FOUNDATION; and we believe there is NO OTHER FOUNDATION to be laid, but that which is laid, even Christ Jesus, who tasted death for every man, shed his blood for all men; is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also, for the sins of the whole world."

Letter to the Governor and Council of Barbadoes.

With these views, expressed by George Fox, on his own behalf and that of his brethren, I cordially concur; and hence it follows, that between myself, and all persons who reject the doctrines of the proper divinity and atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, there exists a *fundamental* difference of principle. Now I conceive that were I to give public tokens of religious fellowship and unity, with those who deny the *foundation* on which alone I profess to build, I should forsake the true ground of the Christian believer, and be a partaker in other men's sins. Is it too much to assert that I should indirectly, yet certainly, involve myself in the denial of Him, on whose merits alone rest all my hopes of everlasting salvation?

Here is a practical point on which I would appeal to the consciences of many of your members. I allude to those amongst you—I trust there are many such—who secretly entertain the good old faith of the Christian Quaker; truly believing in Jesus of Nazareth, as the Son of God, the propitiation for our sins, and the Saviour of the world. Do not such individuals dangerously compromise their principles, so long as they continue in church-fellowship with ministers and others, leaders of the flock; who are publicly known not only to disregard, but to repudiate these essential doctrines of the christian religion? In the tenderness of christian affection, I submit this weighty consideration to the verdict of their consciences. "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing," seems to be a language emphatically applicable to all such persons. "Whatsoever is not of faith is *sin*." The religious system which they touch, with which they are associated, which they uphold by their example, is felt and known by them to be

unclean; and on the plainest *moral* grounds, they are bound to forsake and renounce it, lest their souls should die. O how my heart bleeds, when I meet, in the streets, your goodly young people, over whom, as I fear, the enemy of souls is gradually spreading the net of unbelief! O how I mourn over the lovely children, who are likely to grow up to manhood, under a ministry at their meetings, and under a daily influence at home, opposed, as I believe, to the faith once delivered to the saints—the faith whereby we are *saved*! Shall the tender mothers among you, who still love the Lord Jesus Christ, have no pity on their offspring? Shall they continue to expose them to the danger of being separated from the Saviour? Shall they not rather lay them at his feet, with prayer and supplication, and beg of him, to fold them in the arms of his love, that they may be *his own* for ever?

I could not, with a safe conscience, omit this appeal to some of your members; but I beg leave to assure you, that it is made without the slightest feeling of unkindness or disrespect towards another class among you, (a large class as I greatly fear,) who have forsaken that faith in Jesus of Nazareth, as the Saviour of the world, for which I am bold to plead—a faith which was openly professed, and righteously maintained, by our forefathers in the truth. Believing that some at least of this class, are beginning to be dissatisfied with themselves, and uneasy in the dangerous position which they now occupy, I hope it may not be entirely in vain to offer to their renewed attention, the following simple considerations.

First, That the doctrines of the proper divinity, and atoning sacrifice, of our Lord Jesus Christ, are essential parts of the fabric of Christian truth.

Secondly, That our Lord Jesus Christ, in all his gracious offices, is received *by faith*; and through faith in him, we are saved.

Thirdly, That the absence of this faith, in those to whom the gospel is made known, and especially in those who once believed in him, is ruinous to the soul.

In endeavouring briefly to develop these propositions, I shall of course make my appeal to the Holy Scriptures, which I believe many of you still regard as of divine authority, and as the only outward test by which all controversies in religion are to be settled and decided.

I. Great and important are the principles laid down by the apostle Paul in the following passage: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of *the Spirit of life* in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the

law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, *God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin*, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Rom. viii. 1—4. Compare his previous declaration, "God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, *Christ died for us*. Much more then being now *justified by his blood*, we shall be saved from wrath through him; for if when we were enemies we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."—v, 8—10.

Here it is evident that the incarnation of the Son of God, and his propitiatory death, are represented as essential realities in the christian religion, on which depends its practical value—fundamental principles, out of which springs all its living efficacy for the reconciliation and renovation of sinners. We cannot, therefore, be surprised that an acknowledgment of the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, is upheld by another apostle, as the distinguishing sign of right spirits, and the contrary, as that of false spirits. "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come into the world; and even now already is it in the world.—Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."—1 John iv, 2, 3, 6.

To come in the flesh, seems to be a mode of expression quite inapplicable to men in general. It evidently represents the incarnation of a being who had previously existed *out of the flesh*, that is in some other nature than that of man. Accordingly we learn from Scripture, that Jesus Christ was "before" John the Baptist, John i, 30; the Lord of David, Matt. xxii, 43; the helper of Israel in the wilderness, 1 Cor. x, 4, the living Redeemer of Job, xix, 25; before Abraham, John viii, 58; in the beginning, John i, 1; in glory with the Father before the world was, John xvii, 5; "from of old, from everlasting," Mic. v, 2. "I am Alpha and Omega," says Jesus, "*the beginning and the end, the first and the last!*" Rev. xxii, 13. "That which was *from the beginning*, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John i, 1—3.

If then the inquiry be raised, in what nature the Son of God thus existed in times of great antiquity before his coming in the flesh, in the beginning of the world, and from all eternity?—the Christian cannot hesitate to answer, Not in the nature of finite man—not in that of angels, or of any created being, however exalted—but in the true and proper nature of God himself; or, in other words, in *perfect oneness* with the Father who sent him. “I and my Father,” said Jesus, “*are one.*” He whom John describes as the “Eternal Life,” (doubtless, because he is the source and origin of it,)—who was “in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”—Phil. ii, 6: by whom “all things were made,” and without whom was not any thing made that was made,”—John i, 3: by whom “were all things created, both in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible,” Col. i, 16;—whose human birth was ushered in with the songs of angels, when he arose as “the sun of righteousness,” over a dark and guilty world;—who gave sight to the blind, limbs to the maimed, and life to the very dead;—who knew the hearts of all men, and freely exercised the divine prerogative of forgiving sins, John ii, 24; Luke vii, 48;—who rebuked the stormy winds and waves, and immediately there was a great calm;—who burst the bands of death asunder, triumphed over the grave, led captivity captive, ascended up on high, and sat down at the right hand of the majesty of the Father;—who poured forth, on his infant church, the gifts and graces of the Spirit, Acts ii, 1—3; and still baptizes his people with the Holy Ghost and with fire,” Matt. iii, 11;—who is exalted far above all principality, and power,—both in this world and the world to come, Eph. i, 21;—who reigns supreme over his universal church, and over all things for the church’s sake, v, 22;—whom all the angels of God are commanded to worship, Heb. i, 6;—who will come again in glory, surrounded by that heavenly host, to judge the quick and the dead, before whose face “the earth and the heaven” shall flee away, Matt. xiii, 41—43; Rev. xx, 11;—this Jesus, Immanuel, the King of kings, the Saviour of the world—*cannot be less than God.* “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,” John i, 1; “his name shall be called the mighty God,” Isa. ix, 6. This is his name whereby he shall be called the LORD, (JEHOVAH) our righteousness.” Jer. xxiii, 6. Thomas answered and said unto him, “My Lord and my God.” John xx, 28. Of the Israelites, “as concerning the flesh. Christ came, who is over all. God blessed for ever. Amen.” Rom. ix, 5. “God was manifest in the flesh.” 1 Tim. iii, 16.

We have, therefore, plainly declared to us in the gospel of Christ, as it is recorded in Holy Scripture, the awful doctrine, that the only-begotten Son of God—the eternal Word himself, the Holy One of Israel, and truly God—took upon him, in the fullness of time, the form of a servant, and the likeness and nature of man. This vast and mysterious truth cannot possibly be of a secondary or superficial importance, in the religion of Jesus. It is no mere ornament of the fabric, displayed to us to gratify our curiosity. It is a truth of unutterable sublimity, which “the angels desire to look into,” calculated to excite, in the mind of the believer, the most profound emotions of wonder, love, and praise—nor can we for a moment imagine that this glorious act of divine love and condescension, should not be directed to some vast purpose, adequate to its portentous character and magnitude.

That purpose is declared in Scripture to be nothing less than the redemption of the world—the deliverance of mankind from the bondage of sin and Satan, and from the bitter pains of eternal death, and his final translation to the kingdom of everlasting rest and glory. For this end it was needful, according to the purposes of infinite wisdom, not only that the Son of God should become incarnate in the nature of man, but that in that nature—perfectly sinless as it was—he should die as a sacrifice for sin—that he should “taste death for every man.” Thus he is described in Scripture as becoming incarnate, *in order that he might die*. “Forasmuch, then, as children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that *through death*, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham; wherefore, in all things, it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation (or atonement) for the sins of the people.” Heb. ii, 14—17.

It would be at variance from my present design were I to enter on any detailed argument on the subject of the atonement. I must, however, venture on the assertion, that this doctrine does, in a remarkable manner, pervade the Holy Scriptures—that it is enforced on our attention by the joint testimony of the law, the prophets, the Psalms, the gospel histories, the apostolic epistles, and the Revelation. The sufferings of the Messiah in the flesh, even unto death, were foreshadowed by the ceremonies of the Mosaic institution, and foretold, with wondrous accuracy, by David, Daniel,

Isaiah, and Zechariah. They are described, in all their particulars, in the four gospel histories; were often adverted to, beforehand, by our Lord himself; and are dwelt upon, with peculiar emphasis and frequency, in the writings and recorded preaching of the apostles. And further, whether we reflect on the sacrificial ordinances of the Jews and their progenitors, those shadows of good things to come, or on the testimony of prophecy, or on the express doctrine of Jesus himself and his apostles—we are constrained to confess that his sufferings were *vicarious*—that he bore, in his own body, the punishment due to our sins—that his death was the one appointed propitiatory sacrifice, for the sins of the whole world. The sacrifices of Abel, of Abraham, and of Job, the burnt offerings and sin offerings of the law, the blood of the bullock and of the goat, sprinkled over the mercy-seat, were sacrifices of *atonement*—the shadows having no virtue in themselves for the blotting out of sin, but pointing effectually to the one great sacrifice to come. Prophecy declares, that the Messiah was to be “cut off, but not for himself;” Dan. ix, 26; or turning the future into the past, that “he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities;” that “the chastisement of our peace was upon him;” that “all we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isa. liii, 5, 6.

It was in this peculiar character of the sacrifice for sin, that Jesus was pointed out to the people by his forerunner, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John i, 29. “The Son of Man,” said Jesus himself, “came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.” Matt. xx, 28. “I am the good Shepherd—the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” John x, 11. It is the often repeated doctrine of Paul—a doctrine which he presents to us under a variety of aspects,—that we have “redemption” through the “blood” of Jesus, “even the forgiveness of sins.” “If,” says he, “the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.” Heb. ix, 13, 14.

The apostle Peter assures us that “we are not redeemed by corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot;” 1 Pet. i, 18, 19; that Christ suffered, “the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,” iii, 18; that he “bare our sins in his own body on the tree that we being dead to

'sin, should live unto righteousness—by whose stripes," he adds, "ye were healed," ii, 24, 25. John declares that "he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii, 2. Finally, the four living creatures and the twenty elders, (representing, as we may presume, the whole glorified church,) are described, in the Revelation, as addressing to Jesus, their "new song" of praise. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," v, 8, 9. "And I beheld," says John, "and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, (or living creatures,) and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever," v, 11—13.

The christian doctrine of atonement, has often been miserably misrepresented by unbelievers. They appear to imagine that we ground that doctrine on the wrath and natural implacability of God; and they have often ascribed to us the sentiment, that this wrath was appeased, and the mind of God *changed* towards us, by the sufferings and death of an innocent victim. Such assuredly was never the doctrine of Christians. No, my dear friends; we believe that our God is a God of infinite and *unchangeable* holiness and benevolence—that in his own inscrutable wisdom, he has appointed this *means* for our reconciliation—and that the gift and sacrifice of his only-begotten Son, is the glorious result, not of wrath, but of LOVE. "God is love. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." 1 John iv, 8—10. Nor is Christ ever represented, in Scripture, as a constrained sufferer, or his death as a compulsory sacrifice. When overtaken and seized by his enemies, he could have prayed the Father, and He would have given him "twelve legions of angels" for his deliverance; but he forbore. In his own voluntary love, and in perfect unison of counsel with the Father, "He *made himself* of no reputation, *took* upon him the form of a servant, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Phil. ii, 7, 8. He gave himself a ransom for all." 1 Tim. ii, 6. "Christ loved his church and gave himself for it." Eph. v, 25. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends!" John xv, 13.

And this precious, all-availing, sacrifice, was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world. 1 Pet. i, 20. God foresaw the wickedness of the unbelieving Jews, under the temptations and influence of Satan; and he fore-ordained that *suffering unto death* of his beloved Son which *he knew* would be occasioned, when he should send him into the world, by their hardness and impiety. The act of the Jews was a voluntary act: the guilt of it, rested, without reserve or abatement, on their own heads. But God was pleased to *over-rule* it, for the highest and most glorious of purposes—the redemption and everlasting salvation of our fallen race.

I cannot leave this branch of my subject without soliciting your attention, to another most important consideration. The "forgiveness of sin" is indeed a benefit of unutterable value; but it is not the only benefit which we derive from the death and sacrifice of Christ. There are various passages of Scripture, which indicate that this was also the appointed means of our procuring the gift of the Holy Spirit; that it was, as it were, the price paid for that divine, enlightening, regenerating influence, by which alone we can be led into the way of righteousness, and prepared for an inheritance with the saints in bliss. "His visage" cried the prophet, "was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men—so shall he sprinkle many nations." Isa. lii, 14, 15. Of the nature of this sprinkling we may form some just view, from a corresponding passage—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you;" Ezek. xxxvi, 25—27. "Thou hast ascended on high" said the Psalmist, in prophecy, to his Lord and Saviour, "thou hast led captivity captive; *thou hast received gifts for men*; yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." Ps. lxxviii. 18.—Comp. Eph. iv, 7, 8.

Here then is the sum and substance of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—the forgiveness of sin through his atoning blood; and deliverance *from* sin, by the power of his Spirit. It appears to me that these two things—even *pardon* and *cure*—constitute redemption. There can be no heaven for our fallen, lost, degraded, race without them; and though they are plainly to be distinguished, they can never be separated. Bound together by an indissoluble tie, they are the appointed means of both our virtue and happiness; and they are the

joint result of the same glorious dispensation of divine wisdom, holiness, and love—the *incarnation, and propitiatory death, of the Son of God*. Nor is it to be forgotten, that this sublime dispensation, predetermined as it was before the creation of the world, possessed a divine virtue and efficacy, *before* as well as *after* the event. There are good grounds for our believing, that whatsoever of spiritual influence, has been bestowed upon mankind, in any age of the world, has flowed through this medium; and glorified souls of every generation, doubtless, unite in reverently ascribing their salvation to the LORD GOD, and to THE LAMB.

II. I trust that abundant evidence has now been given that the doctrines of the proper divinity, and propitiatory death, of our Lord Jesus Christ, form no subordinate part of the christian religion, but are absolutely, primary, fundamental, in the fabric of divine truth; and cannot fail to be embraced by that living faith in Jesus Christ *himself*, which is the means of our salvation.

I would lay a particular stress here, on the word *himself*; because I wish to be clearly understood as meaning the *Jesus* of the New Testament, who was begotten of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, dead and buried, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. He is the Christ, the *only Christ*—anointed of the Father, to be our prophet, our sacrifice, our priest, and our king.* It was he whom his disciples worshipped as the Son of God. Matt. xiv, 33;—John ix, 35—38. It was he who declared himself to be the Christ, to the woman of Samaria. “The woman saith unto him, I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, *I that speak unto thee, am He.*” John iv, 25, 26. It was he, to whom Peter, on behalf of himself and his brethren, addressed the language, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Matt. xvi, 16; and again, “We believe, and *are sure*, that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God.” John vi, 69. It was he who appeared to Saul on his journey to Damascus, and was “straightway preached by that gifted convert, as Christ, the Son of God.” Acts ix, 20. “Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is *VERY CHRIST.*” v, 22.

Now this *very* Christ, in all his gracious offices, is received *by faith*; and through faith in HIM, we are saved. The evidence of this truth, contained in Holy Scripture, is clear and abundant. “God so loved the world, that he gave

* The word Christ, which is Greek, precisely corresponds with the Hebrew term Messiah, and means “the anointed one.”

his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii, 16. "But as many as *received him*, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe on his name*." John i, 12. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, hath everlasting life." vi, 47. "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." xi, 25, 26. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren," said Paul to the people of Antioch, "that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him, *all that believe* are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts xiii, 38, 39. Nor can it be denied that this saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, has a very especial reference to his *sonship*, and his *sacrifice*. "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the *Son of God*; and that believing, ye might have life through his name." John xx, 31. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1 John, v, 4, 5. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, *even so* must the Son of Man be lifted up," (namely on the cross; comp. John xii, 32, 33:) "that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life." John iii, 14, 15. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, *through faith in his blood*." Rom. iii, 23—25. Finally, the innumerable company of the redeemed ones, who surround the throne of heaven, and sing the praises of the Father and the Son, are declared to be they "which have come out of great tribulation, and have *washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb*—THEREFORE are they before the throne of God." Rev. vii, 14, 15. I beg of you, to dwell on the full meaning of this important THEREFORE. Under the convincing and converting power of the Holy Ghost, the sinner repents of his transgressions, turns away from his iniquities, and believes in Christ as the sacrifice for sin, and Saviour of the world. Thus it is that by a living, and heaven-born, faith in Jesus, he washes his polluted robes and makes them white "in the blood of the Lamb."—THEREFORE is he reconciled to God the Father, accepted and adopted in Christ; and being, thoroughly cleansed and sanctified by the Spirit, he finally receives his admission to "the general assembly and church of the first born," in the kingdom of rest and glory. So be it with *you all, saith my soul!*

III. I now come to a very painful part of my subject. "The absence of this faith in Christ in those to whom the gospel is made known, and especially in those who once believed in him, is ruinous to the soul." Awful as is this proposition, it seems impossible to deny the truth of it, in the face of our Lord's emphatic command and declaration; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Mark xvi, 15, 16.

Here I wish expressly to disclaim the sentiment that the knowledge of the Scriptures, and of that Saviour of whom they testify, is *essential* to salvation. Although the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as it is recorded in Scripture and preached in right authority, is God's chosen instrument for the salvation of sinners, (see John xx, 31; Rom. i, 16; 1 Cor. i, 18;) yet we cannot doubt, that under the equitable government of a righteous God, the degree of faith required in every man, is precisely commensurate with the degree of light, bestowed upon him. For my own part, I am ready to make large allowances for various degrees of ignorance, and for the errors and prejudices of education. It is my firm conviction, that even among nations who know not Jesus, all who believe, and obey the *measure* of divine light bestowed upon them, are graciously accepted of the Father, through the merits and mediation of the Son of his love. Such persons, having faith in God, according to their degree of knowledge, and proving their faith by their obedience, are true partakers, as I believe, of the virtue and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ. "In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts x, 35. But amongst us, who have the Scriptures in our hands, and *who enjoy the full light of this gospel day*, a want of faith in Jesus Christ, as the Saviour of the world—and still more, a denial of Him, after we have once believed in his name—must surely be regarded as in the highest degree dangerous, and if persevered in to the end, absolutely fatal. "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." 1 John ii, 22, 23; comp. v. 11, 12. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him might be saved. He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." John iii, 17, 18.

"We are all, by nature, the children of wrath." Eph. ii, 3. *Here is our condemnation*: "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life." *Here is our reconciliation.* Now

awful, yet how clearly consequent, is the alternative described by the apostle: "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God ABIDETH on him!" John iii, 36.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that *Jesus Christ is in you*, except ye be reprobates?" 2 Cor. xiii, 5. The Scriptures plainly testify, that a delightful, and most salutary, union subsists between Christ and his believing children. They are members of the mystical body of which He is the head; or to adopt another metaphor, living branches in the true vine, deriving all their nourishment from the parent stem. They dwell in Him, and *He dwells in them*. "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know, that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and *I in you*." John xiv, 18—20. And again, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and *I in them*." xvii, 26. It was the petition of Paul for the Ephesians, that "Christ" might *dwell in their hearts*, "by faith." Eph. iii, 17. And for himself, he declares, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but *Christ liveth in me*; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. ii, 20. When Christ—even Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified and risen Saviour—is received into the soul by faith, he dwells there as the ever present object of our heart-felt reliance, takes upon himself the gracious office of our teacher; and rules over all within us, by the immediate influences of his Spirit. Then truly, in the most proper and emphatic sense of the terms, *He is in us*—"the hope of Glory." Col. i, 27.

Doubtless it was under the immediate teaching of Jesus Christ, by his Spirit, that our forefathers were led out of the various forms and ceremonies, to which they had previously been accustomed, to sit down together in silence before the Lord; and to worship him who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. Theirs was the privilege, in a pre-eminent degree, of witnessing the truth of our Saviour's promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matt. xvii, 20. Invisible yet omnipresent, He condescended to preside over their assemblies both for worship and discipline. Yes, they followed him to the prison-house, and even in the depth of the filthy dungeon, they felt his power and sung his praise. *They surely were among the last of mankind, who could entertain a doubt of the true divinity of Jesus of Nazareth; they served him with uncompromising fidelity; they knew that they were his own, because*

he had bought them with "a price"—even the precious price of his atoning blood. Alas, that any of their descendants should have forsaken the Rock of their salvation, and should have reduced the Saviour of men, in their estimation, to the rank of a *mere principle, or influence!*

Bear with me, my dear friends, while I endeavour to make myself clearly understood, in reference to this critical point—the turning point, as I believe, of our whole subject.

It has always been the doctrine of the Society of Friends, that Christ—even that very Saviour who became incarnate, was crucified, and rose again—is "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John i, 9. For my own part, I cordially concur with the sentiment, that He who dwells and reigns, by his Holy Spirit, in the souls of his believing children, appears by a measure of the same Spirit, in the hearts of *all men*, to enlighten and direct their consciences, to bring them to a sense of their responsibility to God, and to lead them in the paths of virtue. It is my belief, that all men, every where, have their day of visitation, and that a ray from the Sun of righteousness, enters every dark heart of the rational children of God. And where the ray is, there is the Sun. Where the influence of the Spirit is, even in its smallest measure, there is Christ. By it, he is conveyed to the mind, by it, he dwells there. From the emanations of his own light, life, and power, he can never be separated. And further—where Christ is by his Spirit, there are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—one God blessed for ever.

Such, I apprehend, to be the true and ancient doctrine of Friends, on this vital subject.

But to say, that this ray, is *itself* the Sun—that this divine principle or influence is *itself* the Christ; to allege that Jesus was divine, only because this influence dwelt in the temple of his body, even as it dwells in the righteous of all generations; to apply to it the common terms of an orthodox faith—to call it the Son of God, the Saviour, Immanuel, God with us, the Son and sent of the Father,—the Lamb of God—to ascribe to it, the attributes, and offices of the Messiah—is a practice, as I believe, utterly opposed to the testimony of Scripture, and fraught with the deepest danger to the souls of men. I venture to suggest, that this strange notion, is the root of all the other errors which have been promulgated, in this country, by Elias Hicks and many of his followers. Under the imagination that we have *the whole Christ*, as a *thing* or *substance*, in ourselves, we first disregard, and then deny, the divine, incarnate Saviour, of whom the Scriptures testify; and on the plea of an inward and spiritual religion, we renounce the one

great sacrifice for sin, as the means of our reconciliation with God, and the ground of our hope of salvation.

When these two cardinal and fundamental doctrines of the christian religion, come to be denied, other important parts in the great system of truth, are sure to follow in their train. Our views of the lost and degraded state of man in the fall, become weak and obscure. The exceeding sinfulness of sin, is, in measure, forgotten. Hell is robbed of its eternity. The tempter of mankind, and accuser of the brethren, even the devil, subsides into a dream of fancy, a mere notional personification of evil. Even the doctrine of a spiritual influence, loses its scriptural weight and fulness; so that this influence has been known to be confounded with the rational faculty, and on some occasions, with the mere principle of animal or vegetable life.

Far be all such unbelieving views from you, and from myself! Most assuredly, as it is only the influence of the Holy Spirit, which can bring us, effectually, in faith, to Jesus; so it is, through faith in Him, that we receive the larger measures of that divine influence. "If any man thirst," cried Jesus at the feast, "let him come *unto me*, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this," adds the evangelist, "spake he of the Spirit, *which they that believe on him, should receive.*" John vii, 37—39. So, also, Jesus to the woman of Samaria, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and *who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him*, and he would have given thee *living water.*" * * * Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him, a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." John iv, 10—14.

In conclusion, my dear friends, I have only to crave your impartial and deliberate consideration of these remarks. They are offered to you with much respect, and under the feeling of tender, christian, love.

The Lord bestow upon us all, the seeing eye, and the believing heart; reconcile us unto himself through Jesus Christ our Saviour; purify our spirits from all defilement; and finally administer unto us, through the blood of the covenant, a glorious entrance into the realms of everlasting peace!

I remain your sincere,

and affectionate friend,

J. J. GURNEY.

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A DEFENCE

OF THE

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,

WHO CONSTITUTE

THE YEARLY MEETING OF BALTIMORE,

AGAINST CERTAIN CHARGES

CIRCULATED BY JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

BALTIMORE:

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A DEFENCE, &c.

A Pamphlet alledged to have been written by Joseph John Gurney, has recently been published in the City of Baltimore, and gratuitously circulated. It is addressed "to the followers of ELIAS HICKS," but plainly is intended to be understood as referring to the Religious Society of Friends who constitute the Yearly Meeting held at Baltimore. The Representatives of that Meeting, although they deny being "the followers of Elias Hicks," or of any other man, deem it due to the Body they represent, to take some notice of this assault upon a Society, who have given no provocation, nor in any way afforded the least justification for this wanton attempt, to bring them and their principles into disrepute with their fellow professors of Christianity.

In the first place we explicitly affirm, that the allegation of denying the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, here brought against us, is utterly false. The Society of Friends from its original organization have always maintained, and we still continue to maintain, that CHRIST is the only MEDIATOR and SAVIOUR: and we hold this fundamental truth as the CORNER STONE of our faith, and the foundation upon which the whole christian fabric rests. And we believe also, fully and without reservation, the account of the birth, miracles,

death and resurrection of the LORD JESUS, as we find it recorded by the Evangelists in the New Testament.*

It is unhappily true, that in common with many other Christian denominations, divisions have, within a few years past, arisen in our Society, and that as regards us, many unkind and erroneous representations have been industriously circulated; by which a very unjust impression has been made upon the public mind, both in this country and in England. To these we have hitherto patiently submitted, nor would we now notice the present covert attack, but for the many aspersions and dark insinuations with which it abounds. Amongst which we view the laboured efforts of the Author to establish the verity of various indisputable truths, which, so far as concerns us, have never been controverted. In this way an attempt is artfully made to leave an impression that we deny these truths.

Among the several denominations professing the Christian name, there will be found many conflicting opinions relative to modes, forms and ceremonies of Divine worship, and also as regards doctrines, creeds, and constructions of the Scriptures; and much strife and contention have grown out of these discordant views. The Society of Friends have not felt themselves called upon to embark in these controversies. Satisfied that "pure and undefiled religion," does not consist in abstract opinions, however correct these opinions may be—nor in outward ceremonies, nor in human institutions or ordinances,

*As a further and full refutation of this unfounded accusation, we here submit the following extract from our church discipline.

"If any in membership with us shall blaspheme, or speak profanely of Almighty God, Christ Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, they ought to be timely and earnestly treated with, for the conviction of their understanding, that they may experience repentance and forgiveness; but should any, notwithstanding such brotherly labour, persist in their error, or deny the divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the immediate revelation of the Holy Spirit, or the authenticity of the scriptures, as it will thereby be manifest, that they are not one in faith with us, the Monthly Meetings where they belong, ought to declare the same and issue their testimony (of disownment) accordingly."

but in a regeneration of the soul, John iii. 3. whereby it is restored into the Divine harmony, and brought into a union and communion with its Creator,—we do not therefore rely upon mere opinions, nor upon the observance of outward rituals, or ceremonies, for salvation.

We most assuredly believe that the dispensation of the Messiah is a spiritual dispensation—that in the fulness of time, he did come to establish his glorious kingdom of peace and righteousness in the world, as had been clearly foreseen in the visions of light, and was plainly foretold by the inspired Prophets: and we also believe that, in the fulfilment of his own gracious promise, he is still with his faithful and obedient children, and will continue to be so, “even unto the end of the world,” Mat. xxviii. 20, as a tender Shepherd watching over his flock; and by the influence and operation of his Holy Spirit, plainly manifesting to them, the way in which they should go, and what he requires of them:—our confidence is therefore, in HIM alone; and it is to HIM we look for a knowledge of those things that pertain to everlasting life and salvation. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him.” James i. 5.

According to the testimony of the learned and deeply experienced Apostle Paul “the *natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are Spiritually discerned.” 1 Cor. ii. 14. And again, “what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God.” 1 Cor. ii. 11.

As a full confirmation of these solemn truths, we are expressly told by our Lord himself, that “no man knoweth the Son but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.” Mat. xi. 27. And we are instructed by the same high authority that although Divine mysteries are hid “from the wise and prudent” of this world, Mat. xi. 25. yet they are revealed to the sincere inquirer after Truth, who becomes sufficiently humble to

seek this knowledge through the only medium appointed of God for its attainment;—that is, by a direct revelation to the soul, through the influence and operation of “the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” John i. 9.—Instead therefore of cultivating in ourselves, and endeavouring to excite in others, uncharitable feelings towards our neighbours, or of seeking contention with them—instead of wasting our time in vain attempts to display our learning in relation to mysteries, which, without a DIVINE REVELATION, are incomprehensible to the human understanding, and about which the learned “after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world,” Col. ii. 8. have never been able to agree! how unspeakably important is it to us, that we should with all humility and diligence, labour to attain through that only certain medium, to the true and saving knowledge of God. We are assured by Christ himself, that in this knowledge consists “ETERNAL LIFE.” “This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” John xvii. 3.

The attempt to arrive at this knowledge by any other means, than that appointed by God himself, to wit, by the revelation of his Son, to every individual soul, always has been, and we believe always will be found unavailing: God will not give his glory to another. Is. xlii. 8. He is omniscient and omnipresent, and reserves to himself the especial and direct moral government of his creation.

From the first gathering of our Religious Society into an organized body, they openly proclaimed to the world, that they did believe the day was come when a pure spiritual worship was instituted. John iv. 23, 24. They believed it was to this dispensation that the inspired prophets referred, when in speaking of the advent of the Messiah, they declared in the name of the Most High, “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh,” Joel ii. 28, and “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Is. xi. 9.

This gracious promise, we believe, has been fulfilled according to the assurance of our Lord Jesus Christ when, having finished the work assigned him, and being about to ascend to the Father, he, addressing his followers said, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you," John xvi. 7, and again, "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the spirit of Truth," John xiv. 16, 17, "when he, the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." John xvi. 13.

Having a full and unwavering faith in these gracious promises, and believing, according to the testimony of the Apostle, that "the manifestation of the spirit is given to every man," 1 Cor. xii. 7, and that we have no need that any man teach us, "but as the same anointing teaches us of all things," 1 John ii. 27, we look to it as *the medium* by which we can be rightly instructed in the knowledge of those things that pertain to our everlasting salvation.

At the time the division took place in our society, and when a small number of our members withdrew from the general body of Friends then assembled at their Yearly Meeting in the city of Baltimore, and set up a separate meeting of their own,* strenuous efforts were made to excite a prejudice in the public mind against us, by the circulation of various false reports, unjustly charging us with denying the authority of the scriptures; calling in question the divinity of Christ, and promulgating infidel principles. The Yearly Meeting under these circumstances, considered it proper to publish a declaration, in the form of an epistle, to its members, stating the ground of our faith and profession—believing that an advantage might now result from a republication, and more general circulation of this appeal, we here insert it, preceded by some extracts from the minutes of the meeting, to wit:

*The whole number of representatives to the Yearly Meeting from our several quarterly meetings was 54: of these, two only withdrew from us, and united themselves with the separatists.

"At a Yearly Meeting of Friends held in Baltimore, by adjournments, from the twenty-seventh of the Tenth Month to the thirty-first of the same, inclusive, 1828."

"THE meeting having been brought under great exercise, on account of the circumstances developed in the information contained in the Epistles from several Yearly Meetings, of the dissensions among the members of our Society beyond the limits of this Yearly Meeting, and the criminations promulgated in the form of charges, against those who have hitherto been considered by us as brethren, baptised by the same Spirit into the same body; has not seen its way to respond to charges, emanating from meetings, possessing the same extent of powers with itself, but over whose acts it can have no supervision or control.

"Believing, as we do, that each Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends, constitutes of itself a body possessing, not less of right than from necessity, all the powers of self-government, we neither claim the right to control the judgment, nor to annul upon the proceedings of others; nor can we, upon the same principles, recognise the right or the power, in them, to control, or prescribe rules for our conduct.

"This meeting has not considered itself called upon, to advance any new principle of faith: nor in its communications with other Yearly Meetings, with which it corresponds, to explain, or expound those principles which have constituted the bond of union among its members, since the first establishment of the Society; under a belief that these principles are well known, not only to our members, but to the well informed portion of all christian denominations throughout the world: and we are persuaded that if Friends in all sections of the country, where discord and disunion have appeared, will settle down into that state of quietude, where only true wisdom is to be found, and ask counsel of Him "who giveth liberally and upbraideth not," they may yet experience the assurance of that

blessing, which is reserved for the righteous from the foundation of the world.

"The circumstance which has transpired during the session of this meeting, of a few members of our Society having withdrawn from it, with the avowed intention of establishing within its limits, another meeting of Friends, (notwithstanding that of the whole number of Representatives attending this meeting from the several Quarterly Meetings of which it is composed, all are present, and remain united with the body of Friends who constitute this Yearly Meeting, except two,) renders it necessary for the preservation of good order, and uniformity in the administration of our church government, that the relation in which such stand towards our Society, shall be now settled. It is, therefore, the judgment of this meeting, that all such members as have already withdrawn, and such others as may associate with them in the establishment and support of other meetings, under the name of Friends' meetings, shall be considered as having relinquished their rights of membership with us.

"The following Epistle addressed to the members who constitute this Yearly Meeting, was produced by the representatives, and being read and deliberately considered, the meeting, after a time of solemn quiet, united therewith, to wit:

"To the Quarterly, Monthly, and Preparative Meetings, which constitute this Yearly Meeting, and to our members individually.

Dear Friends,

"Having been favoured through the renewed extension of Divine Goodness, once more to assemble in the capacity of a Yearly Meeting, our minds have been drawn into near affection towards our absent brethren, and in this feeling we cordially greet you, being deeply solicitous that the peace of God which passeth all understanding, may preserve you in your several allotments.

"It is our earnest desire that Friends every where, may be honestly engaged to ascertain for themselves the ground of their profession, and the foundation of their hopes, unawed by human authority, unbiassed by earthly affection; firmly believing that it is only by yielding an unqualified obedience to the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus our Lord, that this knowledge can be attained, or that we can witness in ourselves, as Paul testified he did, a redemption from the law of sin and death, and a solid establishment in the unchangeable Truth.

"It was by a steadfast adherence to the discoveries of Divine Truth in their own minds, that the primitive worthies of our Society, were strengthened to maintain their ground against all the opposition and persecution they had to encounter, and in many instances even to turn the hearts of their enemies, so that they became the faithful advocates of that which they had formerly opposed.

"Through the medium of the same light of Divine Truth, it was that they were enabled clearly to see many evils prevalent in the world, and became qualified to bear a faithful testimony against them, though some of these were countenanced and even sanctioned by the highest earthly authority. By no other means, than by those appointed in infinite wisdom for the salvation of the rational creation, can we hope to be empowered to stand forth as firm advocates of the glorious cause of truth and righteousness in the earth, and to raise a standard against the evils that abound at this day. May we, therefore, **"be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might."**

"Soon after Friends were known as a separate Society, many of them emigrated to this country, and brought with them their religious principles and testimonies;—their sober correct manners and their industrious habits. Though far separated from each other, and widely scattered over this large continent, they constituted but one family; continued to correspond with one another, and maintained without abatement, those friendly and social relations that ought to subsist among brethren. In the gradual progress of their settlement on this continent, they

formed themselves as circumstances seemed to render it necessary, into eight Yearly Meetings, in addition to one in London, each independent of the others, distinctly and confessedly possessing equal rights and powers, as regards making and enforcing Discipline, and every other prerogative; acknowledging no supremacy or head, He alone excepted, who declared himself to be the only Shepherd and Bishop of his Church, our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Although this was the state of our Society as regards its municipal economy, harmony prevailed through all its departments, and the right of membership in any one of these Yearly Meetings, conferred the same rights throughout them all. At the same time a regular Epistolary correspondence was kept up between all these meetings, and the acknowledged ministers of the Society, under the apprehension of religious duty, were frequently engaged in the exercise of their gifts, to travel and attend these meetings, in which they were kindly received and fully acknowledged; and the Society exhibited to the world a community more firmly and more cordially united, than all the outward creeds or articles of faith, formed by human contrivance, had ever been able to effect in any other religious association in our times. The reason we think, is clear, the Society was, as we believe, measurably "by one spirit baptised into one body."

"The great fundamental article of Faith, insisted upon by the Society from the time of its first establishment, has been, the necessity of obedience to the manifestations of Divine light and life upon the soul; that grace which, according to the testimony of the Apostle, "hath appeared unto all men" with saving energy; that Comforter referred to by our blessed Lord himself when during his outward manifestation he declared to his disciples, "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for *you* that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send him unto you." "When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." In a word to that witness for God in the heart, of the efficacy of which ample testimony is borne throughout the Scriptures,

by the Prophets and Apostles and servants of the Lord, in every age and generation of the world.

"Moses in his last advices to the Tribes of Israel, of whom he had long been the leader through the wilderness, says, "This commandment" (meaning the Spiritual life of the Law by which they might discover through the outward veil or type, the great antitype to which it pointed) "which I command thee this day is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off, it is not in heaven that thou shouldst say who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it; neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it, but the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it." A Prophet under the law, after he had clearly shown the people, that their afflictions and distresses were the effect of their transgressions, directs them to that within them which would lead them in the way they ought to go. "Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers, and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left." "The law made nothing perfect," "for if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second;" "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, (to those under the Law, through one of the Prophets,) that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their Fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days, saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God and they shall be my people; and they shall teach no more every man

his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying know the Lord, for they shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." Not that the Law of the Spirit was ever withheld from them, but because their views and affections being centred on visible things, their attention was engrossed "by the Law of a carnal commandment" and outward ordinances: they had lost sight of the enduring substance to which the Law pointed—they had cast off the Law of the Spirit and turned to dumb idols: it was necessary that they should return unto the Lord, from whom they had so deeply revolted, and experience in their souls a renewed impression of the Divine Law written, not as was the Law of Moses, on Tables of stone, but on the Tables of the heart. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, thus testified, "I indeed baptise you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the Garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Though constituted the administrator of water baptism, John had a clear sight of the distinction between that outward, and superficial rite, and the inward, substantial and efficient nature of the spiritual baptism of Christ; a distinction well illustrated by the two elements, water and fire. Water which can only cleanse the surface, was used by John as a lively figure of an internal purification. In the spiritual baptism, no natural element can reach the moral disease in man; but as fire can thoroughly purify any natural substance subjected to its operation, so that Divine Principle in man which from the analogy of its operations on the soul, to the effect of fire on matter, is illustrated in Scripture by the same name. As saith a prophet, "behold I will send my Messenger and he shall prepare the way before me, but who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify

the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver." And again, "the day of the Lord cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble," and "the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." This operation of refinement and purification, can render the human soul a fit temple for the most High to dwell in. "Know ye not," says the Apostle Paul, "that ye are the temple of God; and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?" Christ in his conversation with Nicodemus, on the nature and importance of the new birth, says, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."—And again, on another occasion, "it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." To adduce all the evidence that the Scripture furnishes, of the spiritual nature of the Gospel dispensation, we might transcribe the greater part of the Book.

"Whilst Friends remained on the simple ground to which they had been manifestly called, out of the many superstitions and dark errors into which Christendom had fallen, there was no schism, rent, nor division among them. In the mean time, though poor, despised and neglected by the world, though ridiculed by the inconsiderate, and contemned by the learned, accused by some of being fanatics, by others as being infidels, because they could not conscientiously unite with other denominations of professing Christians, in many of the principles and practices admitted by them; yet amongst themselves peace, concord, and charity greatly abounded.

"Divers charges have been circulated against us: such as that we condemn the authority of the Scriptures; and deny the Divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Which charges, however strenuously urged, and however often reiterated are nevertheless unfounded. In relation to the Scriptures; we are free to acknowledge what has always been acknowledged by the society, that as Peter says, "the prophecy came not in old

time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is true we do not call them The Word of God, because that appellation is in the Scriptures themselves, appropriated to a Principle higher than any written Testimony can be. "In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the WORD WAS GOD," before all Scripture or writings: The Scriptures contain a record of the Lord's dealings, with his rational creation, in different ages and generations of the world. They also contain many declarations of Spiritual Truth, and the testimony of many who have come to the experimental knowledge of the living and saving operation of Truth in themselves; but they do not constitute the highest and most certain and infallible Rule of Faith and practice. Christ said to the Jews of the time of his outward manifestation, "search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me; and ye will not come to me that ye might have life." The Law and the Prophets were read in the synagogues every Sabbath day, yet this did not remove the veil that was over the minds of the people. George Fox in a letter to the Princess Elizabeth, says, "All Christendom are on heaps about those Scriptures, because they are not led by the same Holy Ghost as those were that gave forth the Scriptures; which Holy Ghost, they must come to in themselves, and be led by, if they will come into all the Truth of them, and to have the comfort of God, Christ and them. For none can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost, and all that call Christ Lord, but by the Holy Ghost, take his name in vain." Every Friend who has come to the experimental knowledge of the living substance to which the Scriptures point, loves them and encourages others to read them, because, as the Apostle testifies, "that which was written aforetime was written for our learning, that we through patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have hope," and because he can set his seal to their truth.

"In answer to the charge that we deny the Divinity of Christ, we say that we believe what is written in the Scriptures con-

cerning Christ, both as to his outward manifestation in the flesh, and in relation to that Divine Principle of Light and Truth in man, which in Scripture is called "the Christ;" we have certainly never known of any under our name who have ever hinted a doubt, much less expressed a denial of that great and fundamental principle, which has always been the corner stone of our religious profession. Paul might, with the same justice, be accused of denying the Divinity of Christ, when in his Epistle to the Corinthians he says, "henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." And again, because in addressing the converts at Rome he says, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." If this proposition be true, surely the converse is equally true.—If any man possess the Spirit, the Divine nature and life of Christ, he must belong to his household, and be called by his name. It is worthy of observation that precisely the same charges were urged against Friends, when they were first gathered as a distinct society, with this remarkable difference, that in the beginning, these accusations were brought forward by the Hierarchy, Politicians, and others interested in keeping up the old ecclesiastical establishments, as one of the main pillars of the fabric of the existing government, and occasioned cruel and long continued sufferings, upon our faithful predecessors of that day; whereas now the same charges are revived by some who once professed with us.

"While the Society abode in its proper sphere, there was one centre to which it necessarily tended, and which preserved it from aberration. This is the eternal and immutable SPIRIT OF TRUTH which, though designated by various appellations in Scripture, such as "the word nigh in the heart," and which was from the beginning with God, and was God. "The true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" "the unction from the Holy One;" which precludes the necessity of any other teacher, "Christ within the hope of glory." By many other terms is it designated, all pointing to one simple,

indivisible, divine principle, impressed upon the mind of every rational creature, constituting the law of God there, and necessarily leading to peace and happiness when obeyed. A departure from this pure principle of light and life, is the primary cause of all the evils that abound in the world. It constitutes the only efficient and unfailing regulator of the active powers of the mind; and keeps them in due subordination. When that check is disregarded, disorder takes place, and we sink from one degree of degeneracy to another, until we finally become involved in great darkness, whence there is no escape, but by retracing our steps in that measure of light, which the Father of lights may yet mercifully vouchsafe, in order to discover to us the awful danger of the state into which we have fallen, and to enable us to return. We most ardently and affectionately desire, that those who have gone so far astray as to revile their brethren, and say all manner of evil, falsely, against them, may yet be favoured to see, in that light which makes manifest, their error, and the consequences to which it leads, and that they may return to that love which cements in harmony and peace."

We do not believe that the intelligent and honest hearted amongst the different denominations of professing christians, with whom we are commingled in general society, would willingly permit themselves to be misled by any unjust or uncharitable accusations that may be circulated against us, however insiduously these accusations may be veiled, under the cloak of a professed concern for our welfare. With the individual, who, on the present occasion, has lent himself to these purposes, we have no connexion,—nor do we feel any disposition to retort the injuries sought to be inflicted on us. Believing that we are all brethren by creation—the offspring of one universal parent, and knowing that 'in this world we are but sojourners; that we are subject to the like afflictions and infirmities of body, the like disorders and frailties in mind—the like temptations—the same death, and the same judgment,' we

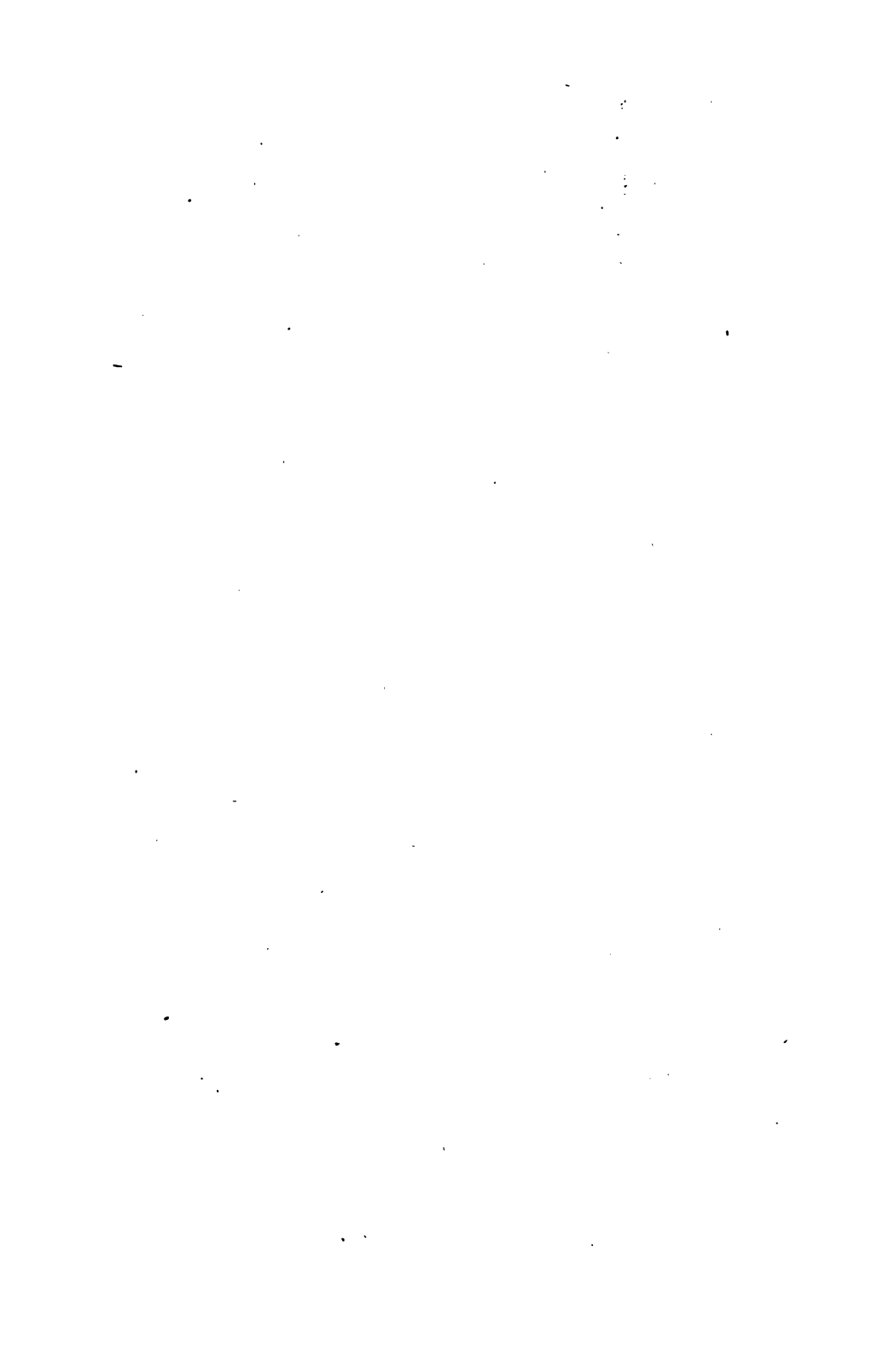
can cherish no hostile feeling towards any, but desire to cultivate charity and good will towards all. Nevertheless, placed under the circumstances that we now are, we have felt it to be our duty to submit this brief appeal, to the calm unprejudiced consideration of our fellow professors of the christian name;—less from a disposition to enter into controversies with any one, or even from a desire to vindicate ourselves, than from an apprehension that it has become our duty to defend the principles we make profession of, against the gross misrepresentations that have been circulated in regard to them.

We do this in the full confidence, that although we may, and certainly do, conscientiously differ from many others in regard to our religious testimonies and modes of public worship, yet those who know us, will at least believe that in our views and opinions we are sincere. As a Religious Society, we seek neither worldly power nor influence.—We claim for ourselves, and are willing that the same inestimable privilege should be secured to all others—the RIGHT to worship God, according to the dictates of our own consciences. We endeavour to live in peace with all mankind, and desire nothing but the glory of God, and the enlargement of his kingdom; which we are assured “is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” Rom. xiv. 17.

Signed by direction and on behalf of the representatives aforesaid,

WM. E. BARTLETT, *Clerk.*

Baltimore, 12th mo. 23d, 1839.



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APPENDIX

TO THE DEFENCE

OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS,

IN THE CITY OF BALTIMORE AND ITS VICINITY,

AGAINST CERTAIN CHARGES

CIRCULATED BY JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY.

Maledicus a malefico non distat nisi occasione.

BY A MEMBER OF THAT SOCIETY.

BALTIMORE :
PRINTED BY WM. WOOLLEY.

1840.

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APPENDIX.

Joseph John Gurney having, in his late publication, addressed "to the followers of Elias Hicks," made some reference to his application for permission to attend a public meeting, in the meeting house on Lombard street, belonging to Friends, and the Representatives of the Yearly Meeting, having in their reply to his publication, not taken any notice of his remarks, relative to this subject, it is deemed proper that a correct statement of the circumstances connected with his application should be preserved. At the same time it is believed to be due to the occasion, here to examine, if it be but briefly, his whole conduct in reference to this "Religious concern," as he has been pleased to term it, in order that the matter may be correctly understood.

In doing this, it is important that the statement we are about to make, should be placed wholly beyond all cavil or dispute; we shall accordingly as regards our *facts*, rely altogether upon *verbatim quotations*, from the original correspondence that took place between the parties in relation to this subject.

When in the city of Baltimore, during the autumn of 1838, Joseph John Gurney stated in writing to Friends, who constitute Lombard street meeting, that it was his desire to have a religious opportunity in that meeting house, and added "my concern is *chiefly* towards all those, whether members of your body or not, who are in the *practice* of attending your meeting on first day mornings."

Upon being made acquainted with his wishes, a respectful note was addressed to him in which he was informed by a committee on behalf of Lombard street meeting, that "after mature deliberation upon the proposal offered by thee, it

"appearing that thy concern is *chiefly* to have a religious opportunity with all those, whether members or not, who "are in the *practice* of attending our meetings on first day "mornings, the Friends who were assembled to consider thy "request, have united in authorising us to inform thee, that "thou art invited to attend our meeting, at any time on first "day morning, when thou mayest feel it right to do so, and "that the way is open for thee to relieve thy mind from any "concern that may rest upon it, in relation to this service."

Joseph John did not avail of the permission here granted, nor did he then give to Friends, any reason why he declined the visit that had been proposed by himself. He has however, now afforded an explanation, in his recent publication wherein he says (page 4,) "I could not *conscientiously* involve myself "in that religious fellowship with your body which would "have been obviously indicated, by my taking my seat among "you, in one of your own meetings for worship."

This explanation is considered as worthy to be preserved in *perpetuam rei memoriam*. It affords a most extraordinary development, and presents before us the spectacle of a man, professing to be a minister of the gospel, avowing himself afraid of moral contamination, by taking his seat in a peaceable congregation, publicly assembled for religious worship, even after he had been assured, that he would be at full liberty to relieve his mind of any "concern" that might rest upon it, in regard to that congregation, should he consider it to be his duty to do so!—It exhibits a rare instance of religious bigotry and arrogance, and forcibly calls to our recollection the fact, that in the *early days of the christian church* there were individuals who affected to have similar "conscientious" scruples, and that *these* carried their precaution so far, that they not only absolutely refused (as in the case before us) to hold any social or religious intercourse with those, who, in their own self-exaltation they stigmatised as "sinners," but under the lofty opinion which they entertained of their own purity

and righteousness, they were offended with the Divine Master, because he not only visited such, but even sat at the same table with them. Mark ii. 15, 16.

Although the sect here referred to, may have ceased to exist as an organised body, yet it is plain that the spirit which animated it, is not dead—and notwithstanding it has often varied its outward garb, as well as its professions and dogmas, (and it may be questioned whether there be any garb or profession which it has not, at some time or other assumed,) yet the members that compose it, have not changed their essential and distinctive character, but in all ages of the church, *that character has remained indelibly fixed upon them*, so that by their fruits they have always been easily known. Under whatever aspect or circumstances they present themselves, or by whatsoever name they may be called, they never fail to display the same accusing spirit—the same uncompromising intolerance, and the same vindictive, persecuting asperity. Profoundly absorbed in the contemplation of their own high religious attainments, and confiding in their own infallibility, they have in every age of the church, been ready to anathematize all, who dare to dissent from them in opinion:—and like Nebuchadnezzar, they are disposed, when clothed with temporal power, to compel every one to worship whatever image or system they may set up; although that system may be so incomprehensible, as to be understood by no one except themselves, and like the great image described by the prophet, composed of parts so utterly incongruous, as to have no natural or possible cohesion or consistency. Dan. ii. 32, 33.

The Representatives of the Yearly Meeting at Baltimore, have, as appears by their Defence, not deemed it necessary to take a detailed notice of the attack made upon the members of that meeting, by the author of the letter addressed “to the followers of Elias Hicks.” It seems rather to have been their desire to avoid a contention that promised no beneficial results, and they accordingly satisfied themselves, with *first asserting* and then *proving* by an extract from their church Discipline,*

*See Defence, page 4.

that the facts alleged by their assailant, *were utterly false*: and having thus relieved themselves from the charges recklessly brought against them, they have left their accuser to adjust his case between himself, his conscience, and the public, in such way as in his discretion he might find most conducive to his own reputation and peace.

This determination on the part of these Friends may have been right. They are essentially a pacific people, and in the present case appear to have had no object but to vindicate themselves and their principles, from the calumnies that had by an itinerant foreigner, been gratuitously circulated against them, and having accomplished this, perhaps they could not consistently with the respect due to themselves and to the religious society they were representing, pursue their accuser any further.

The writer of this Appendix however, believes that an examination of one or two points in this "letter" may not be improper here: even though such examination should be carried no further, than to disclose the effect, that a regular theological education at Oxford, may have upon the mind and principles of a member, of the once simple and unsophisticated society of Friends; and especially how wonderfully such an education enables him to concoct syllogisms, and to lose himself and his readers in the dark mazes of incomprehensible mysticisms.

The author of the "letter to the followers of Elias Hicks" in the 23d and 24th pages of his book,* says, "It has always been the doctrine of the Society of Friends, that Christ—even that very Saviour who became incarnate, was crucified, and rose again—is "the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And he then proceeds. "For my own part, I cordially concur with the sentiment, that He who dwells and reigns, by his Holy Spirit, in the souls of his believing children, appears by a measure of the same spirit, in the hearts of *all men* to enlighten and direct their consciences, to bring them to a sense of their responsibility to God, and to

* In the second edition of his Pamphlet, see page 17.

lead them into the paths of virtue. It is my belief, that all men, every where, have their day of visitation, and that a ray from the sun of righteousness, enters every dark heart of the rational children of God. And where the ray is, there is the sun. Where the influence of the spirit is, even in its smallest measure, there is Christ. By it, he is conveyed to the mind; by it, he dwells there. From the emanations of his own light, life and power, he can never be separated. And further—where Christ is by his Spirit, there are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—one God blessed forever.”

These views are in strict accordance with the true doctrines of the Society of Friends. They are in accordance with the testimony of scripture, and have our unqualified concurrence.

The author then proceeds,

“But to say that this ray is *itself* the sun—that this Divine principle or influence is *itself* Christ; to alledge that Jesus was Divine, only because this influence dwelt in the temple of his body, even as it dwells in the righteous of all generations;—to apply to it the common terms of an orthodox faith—to call it the Son of God, the Saviour, Immanuel, God with us, the Son and sent of the Father, the Lamb of God, to ascribe to it the attributes and offices of the Messiah—is a practice, as I believe, utterly opposed to the testimony of scripture, and fraught with the deepest danger to the souls of men.”

Into what a labyrinth of confusion and mystification does this profound theologian here lead himself! He tells us

1st. That Christ, by his spirit, visits, and is in the hearts of all his believing children—that he dwells and reigns there.

2d. That where the influence of this spirit is, even in its smallest measure, there is Christ. And

3d. That where Christ is *by his spirit*,—“there are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—one God blessed forever.” And he then adds “But to call this the Son of God, the Saviour, Immanuel, God with us, the Son and sent of the Father, the Lamb of God, to ascribe to it the attributes and offices of

the Messiah, is a practice, as I believe, utterly opposed to the testimony of scripture, and fraught with the deepest danger to the souls of men."

Can there, in all the metaphysical disquisitions that have deluged the world, within the past five hundred years, be any thing sound more incomprehensible, or more repugnant to plain common sense than this? If there be, we confess that we have not fallen in with it.

We are here in the first place told (and it is a truth which we most assuredly believe) that Christ dwells in us by his spirit (except we be reprobates. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.) If then, as has been truly affirmed by the author, *Christ is the Son of God*, where arises the danger in *calling him the Son of God*, Immanuel, the Lamb of God, or by any other appellation authorised by scripture? If he really be the Messiah, the Son and sent of the Father, whence arises the awful danger here denounced to the souls of men, of *attributing* to him the blessed and glorious *offices* of the Messiah?

We shall close our remarks upon this "letter" with one single additional reference to it.

In page 4 of his pamphlet the author informs us as follows, "I have perused parts of the sermons and writings of Elias Hicks and other documents, which came from the pens of some of his associates. I have also had the opportunity of hearing the preaching of some of *your ministers*, and have conversed in *private* with several leading *members of your Body*," and thence, he proceeds to charge upon the Society of Friends in the "city of Baltimore and its vicinity," the infidel doctrines which he has affirmed they profess, and for which he has anathematised them.

It is not deemed necessary here to concern ourselves with any constructions that the author may have chosen to put upon "parts of the sermons and writings of Elias Hicks," or upon what he has been pleased to term "other documents which came from the pens of some of his associates." Our

present business lies exclusively between Joseph John Gurney and the Society of Friends "in the city of Baltimore and its vicinity." It is *these* he has rudely assailed, and it is *them* we defend.

Joseph John Gurney referring to them says "I have had the opportunity of hearing the preaching of some of your ministers, and have freely conversed in *private* with several of the leading members of your body," and it was from these alledged conversations and from what he asserts he heard preached, that he has assumed the responsibility of charging upon the Society of Friends "in the city of Baltimore and its vicinity," the impious and profane doctrines that blacken the last paragraph of the 4th page of his book.

Now how are we to reconcile his statements in regard to all this? Joseph John Gurney first tells us, in the same page 4 that he had, by conscientious scruples, been restrained from taking his seat in our religious meetings for worship, and we certainly believe he never did do it; and yet he acquaints us that, he had had the opportunity of hearing the ministers of that meeting preach !! Some valuable light might have been shed on this matter, had this man of *tender scruples* stated, when it was that he had the opportunity referred to, and who were the ministers, belonging to, and acknowledged by this meeting, that he heard preach these doctrines.

As regards his declaration relative to his *private* conversations with *several of the leading members* who constitute the Society of Friends, "in the city of Baltimore and its vicinity," we shall only at the present time remark, that we consider this assertion entitled to exactly the same credit, as that, in reference to the *ministers* of that meeting;—or in other words, our opinion is, that so far as relates to the doctrines he either heard *preached*, or *avowed in conversation*, by any *respectable* member of that meeting, we are safe in asserting that the author has, to use no harsher term, fallen into a great mistake, and perpetrated a flagrant injustice upon the parties he has so grossly assailed.

Having thus as we apprehend, discharged a debt which we believed we owed to Joseph John Gurney, as well as to the Society of Friends "residing in the city of Baltimore and its vicinity," we shall conclude the notice we have deemed it proper at this time to take of him, by subjoining the following remarks which we hope will not be considered irrelevant to the occasion.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS.

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and brideth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." James 1: 26.

It is manifestly clear from this expostulation of the Apostle, that in his day, there was a spurious religion abroad in the world, and it may, we apprehend, safely be affirmed, that there always has been.

Of religion there can effectively be but two kinds, to-wit, that which is spurious and that which is true. In the first, under whatever exterior form it may present itself, is included all systems or professions of religion that are not of Divine origin, but are of human origin, and which have their birth in the human passions and propensities, or are established by human policy, and maintained by human influence and power.

With this kind of religion the world, has greatly abounded. It has been found amongst all nations and people: and notwithstanding that of it, there have been numberless varieties and modifications, yet all these, throughout their endless ramifications, in reality constitute but one family, which, although a discordant one, is nevertheless the offspring of the same parentage,—human interest and human pride.

It was said by one of the sages of antiquity (Plato,) that there is in *matter* a blind refractory force opposing the beneficent purposes of the Creator, and this he affirms "is the origin of evil." And an enlightened Apostle of Jesus Christ has declared "the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not

subject to the law of God." Rom. viii. 7. And further, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness with him, neither can he know them." 1 Cor. ii. 14.

That the propositions here asserted by the Apostle are true, we presume no one will venture to deny: How then can a religion which is the offspring of human learning, or of any human attribute or institution, work out the purification and redemption of the immortal soul?

We know that *in us as men and creatures* there dwelleth no good thing. All contrivances or systems therefore, built up by human wisdom, although their professed object may be the promotion of moral good, must of necessity, partake of the nature and character of the source from whence they spring, and cannot be pure. A bitter fountain does not send forth sweet waters:—neither do men gather grapes from thorns nor figs from thistles; but it remains, and ever will remain to be an unchangeable truth that "that which is of the flesh is flesh"—"earthly, sensual, devilish."

The other kind of religion is, that which is of Divine origin and birth—the offspring of the Divine influence and power, operating directly and immediately on the soul, and by redeeming it from the dominion of the animal propensities and bringing it under the Divine government, reconciles it to God, —restores it into the Divine harmony, and prepares it for an admission into the mansions of eternal rest and peace, according to the gracious purposes of its Creator.

Under one or the other of these two divisions, will be found included, the whole human race, excepting only, that portion who do not believe in the existence of a God, nor in the immortality of the soul,—nor in its moral responsibility. These last commonly attach themselves to no religious party, nor do they make any profession of religion whatever.

Amongst the Israelites, this latter division, were called Sadducees; amongst the Greeks they, at one period, were called Pyrrhonics, and in modern times they are called Atheists or Infidels.

The three divisions here enumerated, it is believed, constitute the only real and substantive distinction amongst mankind, as regards religion, and they were all referred to by our Lord during his outward manifestation.

The first were then called Pharisees, the second, Nazareens or Essenees, and the third, as is above stated, Sadducees. It is manifestly plain, that the religion of the first, was wholly superficial, and consisted altogether in useless ceremonies and external observations. And this has been an invariable distinctive characteristic, of a mere lifeless formal religion, in all ages, and under whatever garb or profession it has appeared.

The religion of the second division here enumerated, being purely spiritual, is quiet, retiring, silent and unobtrusive. It erects to itself no system—attempts no ostentatious display, and is charitable to all. It is gentle and easy to be entreated, and is full of mercy and good fruits. Its votaries, yielding themselves to the influences and teachings of Divine Wisdom, and being thus “led by the Spirit of God” they will, if they continue faithful, and follow their Saviour in the regeneration, become “the sons of God” “redeemed from the world” and from “the spirit of the world.”

It is in this division that throughout all generations have been found the true spiritual worshippers,—they belong exclusively, to no sect nor party, but constitute the regenerated and dedicated servants of God, amongst all sects. They compose that “great multitude, which no man could number of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues,” which the Evangelist saw worshipping “before the throne and before the Lamb.”

“They shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.”

“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Rev. vii. 9, 16, 17.







A letter to the followers of Elias
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